

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 138417 TOSEC 060023

FOLLOWING TELEGRAM FROM USUN NEW YORK DATED JUNE 15, 1977
SENT SECSTATE WASHDC INFO BELGRADE, ZAGREB IS REPEATED TO
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C O N F I D E N T I A L USUN 1903

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TAGS: PINS, PFOR, UN, US, YU

SUBJ: CROAT NATIONALIST TERRORISTS ATTACK YUGOSLAVIA'S
MISSION TO UN

1. SUMMARY. THREE CROAT NATIONALISTS, IN INCIDENT
EVIDENTLY TIMED TO COINCIDE WITH OPENING OF BELGRADE CSCE
MEETINGS, FORCED WAY INTO YUGOSLAVIA'S UN MISSION
AT 1430 JUNE 14. IN FRACAS, YUGOSLAV DOOR ATTENDANT WAS SHOT.
VICTIM, ALTHOUGH REPORTEDLY WOUNDED IN ABDOMEN, IS SAID TO
BE IN NO IMMEDIATE DANGER OF DYING. NYC POLICE HOSTAGE
NEGOTIATING TEAM, AFTER WORKING AN HOUR AND A HALF, PERSUADED
ATTACKERS TO GIVE SELVES UP TO NYC POLICE FROM BARRICADED
OFFICE IN YUGOSLAV MISSION. SWIFT ACTION BY NYC POLICEMAN
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ON DUTY OUTSIDE ON HEARING SHOTS FROM WITHIN MISSION
HELPED FRUSTRATE TERRORISTS' EVIDENT INTENTION TO CAPTURE
A HOSTAGE OR HOSTAGES IN MISSION. NYC POLICE RESPONDED
TO SITUATION IN LARGE NUMBERS AND AT SENIOR LEVEL. AMBASSADOR
LEONARD AND MISOFFS WENT TO SCENE. LEONARD ACTED TO
DISCOURAGE WIDENING OF INCIDENT, WHEN YUGOSLAV SECURITY
OFFICERS SOUGHT TO TAKE MATTERS IN OWN HANDS ON "YUGOSLAV

TERRITORY" AND SUMMARILY KILL CROAT NATIONALISTS. END SUMMARY.

2. AT APPROXIMATELY 1430 JUNE 14, 1977 THREE CROATIAN NATIONALISTS (ACCORDING NYC POLICE VLADIMIR DIZDAR; JOZO BREKALO (AMERICAN CITIZEN); AND M. BUCONJIC (SIC)) ATTACKED YUGOSLAV MISSION TO UN, FORCING ENTRY AND SHOOTING DOOR ATTENDANT RADOMIR MEDIC IN PROCESS. (MEDIC LISTED AS "DRIVER" BY YUGOSLAV MISSION). ON GAINING ENTRANCE, CROATIANS RUSHED UP TWO FLIGHTS OF STAIRS AND BARRICADED SELVES IN OFFICE FACING FIFTH AVENUE (PROBABLY AMBASSADOR PETRIC'S OFFICE). NEW YORK CITY POLICEMAN ON DUTY OUTSIDE OF YUGOSLAV MISSION HEARD SHOTS AND RUSHED IN, HE SPOTTED DOOR ATTENDANT PROSTRATE ON FLOOR AND THIRD MEMBER OF CROATINA GROUP FLEEING UP THE STAIRS. NYC POLICEMAN CHASED CROAT UP THE STAIRS AND SUMMONED REINFORCEMENTS BY WALKIE-TALKIE. NYC POLICE REINFORCEMENTS ARRIVED IN STRENGTH INCLUDING SENIOR POLICE OFFICIALS AND NYC POLICE HOSTAGE NEGOTIATING TEAM. CROAT NATIONALISTS CLAIMED TO HOLD MALE HOSTAGE WHEN POLICE NEGOTIATING TEAM BEGAN A DIALOGUE. IN MEANTIME, YUGOSLAV SECURITY OFFICERS WERE ASSEMBLING.

3. AFTER SOME 90 MINUTES, YUGOSLAVS HAD ACCOUNTED FOR ALL MEMBERS OF THEIR MISSION. CONFIDENT, THEREFORE, THAT CROAT TERRORISTS WERE NOT HOLDING A MISSION MEMBER AS HOSTAGE, YUGOSLAV SECURITY OFFICERS BECAME DETERMINED TO TAKE MATTERS INTO OWN HANDS. THEY STATED OPENLY THAT NYC POLICE SHOULD REMOVE THEMSELVES FROM "YUGOSLAV TERRITORY", SO THAT YUGOSLAVS COULD STORM BARRICADED
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ROOM AND KILL THE ATTACKERS SUMMARILY.

4. USUN SECURITY OFFICERS HAD PROCEEDED SWIFTLY TO SCENE FOLLOWING RECEIPT OF REPORT OF ATTACK. AMBASSADOR LEONARD FOLLOWED SUIT. AT YUGOSLAV MISSION, LEONARD ACTED IN TIMELY WAY TO MEDIATE MATTERS BETWEEN YUGOSLAV SECURITY OFFICERS AND NYC POLICE. SENIOR YUGOSLAV PRESENT WAS COUNSELOR MILIGENKO VUKOVIC. YUGOSLAV DCM MUJEZINOVIC WAS AT LENOX HILL HOSPITAL WITH WOUNDED YUGOSLAV. AMBASSADOR PETRIC DID NOT REACH HIS MISSION UNTIL APPROXIMATELY 1615. LEONARD TELEPHONED OPERATIONS CENTER TO GET WASHINGTON'S CONFIRMATION AT SENIOR LEVEL THAT YUGOSLAVS ENJOYED NO RIGHTS TO EXERCISE SUMMARY JUSTICE IN THEIR MISSION. ADDITIONALLY, LEONARD TELEPHONED UN SECRETARY GENERAL WALDHEIM AND ELICITED WALDHEIM'S SUPPORT TO COUNSEL VUKOVIC BY TELEPHONE NOT TO LET YUGOSLAV SECURITY OFFICERS TAKE MATTERS IN OWN HANDS AND THEREBY EXPAND SCOPE OF INCIDENT. VUKOVIC PAID HEED TO THIS COUNSEL, BUT YUGOSLAV SECURITY OFFICERS REMAINED ADAMANT AND INSISTED ON

THEIR RIGHT TO DEAL WITH ATTACKERS ON "YUGOSLAV TERRITORY".

5. STAND OF YUGOSLAV SECURITY OFFICERS PROVIDED NYC POLICE NEGOTIATORS WITH ADDITIONAL TELLING POINT WITH WHICH TO PERSUADE TERRORISTS TO GIVE SELVES UP TO NYC POLICE.

6. AMBASSADOR PETRIC IN MEANTIME HAD BEEN IN TOUCH WITH WALDHEIM TO PERSUADE ALEHEIM NOT TO ACCEDE TO ATTACKERS' DEMAND THAT WALDHEIM RECEIVE THEIR STATEMENT AND FORWARD IT TO BELGRADE CSCE MEETING. WHEN PETRIC ARRIVED AT MISSION, THE CROAT NATIONALISS HAD JUST TOLD NYC POLICE THAT THEY WOULD SURRENDER IF GUARANTEED SAFE CONDUCT OUT OF YUGOSLAV MISSION. THE PROBLEM WHICH THEN DEVELOPED WAS HOW TO CONTROL THE HIGHLY EXCITED AND VISIBLY, HEAVILY ARMED YUGOSLAV SECURITY OFFICERS WHO WERE INSISTING ON BEING AT THE BOTTOM OF THE STAIRCASE WHEN THE CROAT TERRORISTS WERE BROUGHT DOWN. AMBASSADOR LEONARD AND US MISOFFS URGED PETRIC TO DISARM HIS SECURITY
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OFFICERS AND HAVE THEM GO TO AN ANTEROOM AWAY FROM THE STAIRCASE. IN THE FACE OF STRONG PROTESTS FROM HIS SECURITY OFFICERS. PETRIC DID THIS.

7. AFTER YUGOSLAV SECURITY OFFICERS HAD DISARMED SELVES, THREE WERE PERMITTED TO REMAIN IN LOBBY TO VIEW TERRORISTS BEING RUSHED ON THE DOUBLE OUT OF BUILDING BY PHALANXES OF NYC POLICE. DURING THIS EXIT, NYC POLICE HAD GREAT DIFFICULTY IN RESTRAINING THE YUGOSLAV SECURITY OFFICERS CONFINED IN THE ANTERROM.

8. TERRORISTS MADE SEVERAL DEMANDS WHILE BARRICADED IN OFFICE. THEY INSISTED TO POLICE HOSTAGE NEGOTIATING TEAM THAT MEDIA PHOTOGRAPH CROATIAN AND US FLAGS HANGING OUT OF FIFTH AVENUE WINDOW. (THIS WAS DONE). THEY ASKED THAT TEXT OF LEAFLET (SEPTTEL) TOSSED ON STREET BE DELIVERED TO WALDHEIM AND THAT HE ASSURE THEM IN PERSON (OR VIA AND RADIO STATION TO WHICH THEY HAD A TRANSISTOR RADIO TUNED) THAT HE HAD READ TEXT AND THAT TEXT WOULD BE READ AT BELGRAD CSCE MEETING.

9. ATTACKERS BEING ARRAIGNED IN NYC COURT. REPORTEDLY, PROSPECTS ARE THAT ACTUAL PROSECUTION WILL BE IN FEDERAL COURT UNDER FEDERAL PROTECTION ACT. PETRIC AGREED TO US MISOFF. WITH NYC POLICE STANDING-BY, THAT HE WOULD PROVIDE A COMPLAINANT FROM HIS MISSION FOR COURT PROCEEDINGS.

10. CONDITION OF MEDIC REPORTED SERIOUS BUT MEDIC SAID TO BE IN NO IMMEDIATE DANGER OF LOSING LIFE. WE UNDERSTANDHE WAS SHOT IN LOWER ABDOMEN. TERRORISTS REPORTEDLY FIRED TWO SHOTS. THEY SURRENDERED THREE HANDGUNS AND

TWO DUMMY HANDGUNS.

11. AMBASSADOR LEONARD AND MISOFF EXPRESSED DEEP SYMPATHY AND REGRETS TO PETRIC OVER INCIDENT. AT USUN REQUEST, NYC POLICE ARE PROVIDING ADDITIONAL COVERAGE OF YUGOSLAV MISSION
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AND AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE. USUN RECOMMENDS ARRANGEMENTS BY DEPARTMENT FOR EPS COVERAGE FOR YUGOSLAV CONSULATE GENERAL LOCATED ON 19TH FLOOR OF COMMERCIAL BUILDING.

12. COMMENT: IY DIFFICULT TO SEE HOW NYC POLICEMAN ON DUTY OUTSIDE YUGOSLAV MISSION COULD HAVE PREVENTED THE ENTRANCE FORCED BY THE TERRORISTS. IN THIS CONNECTION, POLICE DO NOT CHALLENGE VISITORS TO MISSION. ON OTHER HAND, SWIFT ACTION TAKEN BY POLICEMAN ON HEARING GUN SHOTS SURELY RESTRICTED POSSIBILITIES FOR ATTACKERS TO CARRY OUT LIKELY INTENTION OF CAPTURING HOSTAGE OR HOSTAGES IN MISSION. BUCONJIC REPORTEDLY WAS EJECTED FROM THE UN IN THE FALL OF 1975 FOR TOSSING CROAT SEPARATIST LITERATURE INTO GENERAL ASSEMBLY HALL FROM VISITORS' SECTION.

13. WE WILL SEEK TO CONFIRM SPELLING OF TERRORISTS' NAMES JUNE 15, SPELLING ABOVE IS AS RECEIVED FROM NYC POLICE.
LEONARD UNQUOTE CHRISTOPHER

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